



Congress Makes Significant Investment in Nutrition Programs for Arkansas's Children and Seniors

I am proud to announce that Congress has approved a significant investment aimed at fighting hunger and promoting healthy eating among children in Arkansas and around the country.

This week, both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed the final Agriculture Appropriations bill. The bill includes a one-year extension of the Child Nutrition Act, which has resulted in a cost savings of \$150 million.

These savings will be reinvested to meet critical nutrition needs in Arkansas and across the country to ensure more children have year-round access to healthy and nutritious meals at school, in child care, and during the summer:

- \$85 million to improve children's access to meals during the summer
- \$25 million to help schools purchase cafeteria equipment to provide healthy school meals
- \$25 million to help states to automatically enroll children in the School Lunch Program
- \$8 million in grants to states to improve health and nutrition in child care settings
- \$5 million in performance bonuses to state Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) agencies that increase rates of breastfeeding

These nutrition programs are of critical importance to our state. In fiscal year 2008, 348,000 Arkansas children participated in the School Lunch Program; 48,000 Arkansans participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; 90,000 Arkansas children participated in the WIC Program; 16,000 Arkansas children participated in the Summer Food Service Program. According to the Food Research and Action Center, Arkansas participation rates in the Summer Food Service Program are much lower than the national average, ranking us 40th among states. The summer feeding pilot money will enable USDA to test out new and promising approaches to summer feeding that will enable states like Arkansas to boost their low summer feeding rates.

These investments are a down payment on a robust reauthorization of the Child Nutrition and WIC programs that serve tens of millions of children in Arkansas and across the country with healthy, nutritious meals.

When so many families in Arkansas and around the country are struggling with job losses and a poor economy, ending childhood hunger and promoting nutrition take on even more importance. In my role as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, I will continue to work toward my goal of a country where no child goes hungry and where nutritious food is available to all children.

In addition, as a result of the Agriculture Appropriations bill's passage, Arkansas will now be able to participate in a critical nutrition program for seniors in need.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) delivers USDA commodities to primarily homebound seniors. Currently 32 states are served by the program, but a lack of funding has excluded seven states with approved plans, including Arkansas. The Agriculture Appropriations bill includes an additional \$5 million to expand the initiative to Arkansas and six other states.

In this time of economic hardship, this critical food program is more important than ever. It is often a place of last resort for seniors who qualify for no other

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form of assistance. The program's providers have been able to leverage these federal funds in a very efficient manner. The typical food package from this program has a retail value up to \$60, but costs the federal government only \$19 per participant per month. This initiative has proven to be a low-cost and life-sustaining program aimed at combating hunger, and I am pleased that Arkansas will now be able to participate.

With Arkansas Pride,



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